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The Legacy of Redlining and Segregation on Des Moines, Iowa

Kendyl Landeck
klandeck@iastate.edu

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Kendyl Landeck
Community and Regional Planning
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klandeck@iastate.edu
Major Professor: Dr. Jane Rongerude, C R P

Introduction

From its beginnings, United States society has differentiated groups of people based upon similarities of the people in each group. Such categorization has enabled certain groups to enjoy privilege in American and others to suffer. For racial groups, such as African Americans, suffering has accompanied their stigmatization in the form of a residential segregation that has systematically deprived them of a basic freedom ,"a deprivation especially onerous when its basis is the unalterable fact of race or ancestry" (McEntire, 1960). Over the course of American history residential segregation has been a central theme in the discussion of the role of housing as it affects quality of life for minorities. Fair housing researchers have applied most of their analytical efforts toward cities and urban settings known to have overt racial tensions, segregation, violence and criminal activity that is most usually associated with minority populations. Such cities include Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, Cleveland and Atlanta, major American urban hubs with large minority populations (Rothstein, 2017b). The Midwest at large, and particularly Iowa, has historically been overlooked in studies addressing social issues impacting minorities and, while that trend generally continues today, such research has begun to emerge in places like Minneapolis/St. Paul, Seattle, Portland and other locales nationally.

Two primary concepts dominate discussion as to the causes of persistent residential segregation; racism and failure of public policy. Racism is the most significant player in the continued segregation of minority groups for the reason that racial preferencing has effectively resisted racial integration. Ultimately, race has been the most influential factor in determining how individuals interact and policy is developed in matters of housing. In addition to blaming endemic racism for residential segregation, the failure of public policy that allows and enables racism to control and dictate how cities and communities across the United States are developed is a major component of this societal injustice. The fact that federal, state and local governments fail to implement and enforce anti-discrimination laws and housing policies that would mandate communities to be more inclusive has brought us to where we are today with segregation still carving its imprint on the American landscape. Another aspect of this legislative failure is and has been the lack of desire of elected officials to control the actions of realtors, banks and lending organizations who benefit and have benefited over time by discriminating against African

Americans and other minority groups through redlining and overt practices which dictate where minorities could or could not rent or buy property. The systemic racism in our country and failures at all levels of government and private sector has created a seemingly insurmountable barrier to overcome.

The Legacy of Redlining and Segregation in Des Moines, Iowa addresses the impact of past federal and local policies, such as redlining and discriminatory housing practices, on the City of Des Moines. The primary purpose of this study is to provide a historical analysis that will help the public gain more knowledge about the history and experience of African Americans in Iowa. It will provide information about

- how segregation was implemented and enforced
- how segregation shaped the City of Des Moines
- how segregation resulted in lower quality neighborhoods for African American families in Des Moines, and
- how the effects of segregation persist.

These items above will help provide answers to the overarching question posed by this research, which is, what are the lasting effects of redlining and segregation on African Americans and African American neighborhoods in Des Moines, Iowa?

Viewing and mapping racial composition data for Des Moines from 1920-2010 will supplement federal and local policy history to help analyze the lasting impact racial discrimination has had and continues to have on the city. This research intends to provide more public knowledge to the overall community about the African American community in Des Moines, which will hopefully initiate a broader conversation related to race and housing. Over the last two decades, several reports, books and media compilations discuss the history of race and discrimination in Iowa. Some of the most influential and essential sources include, the report, "One Economy: Building Opportunity for All, The State of Black Polk County" produced by the African American Leadership Forum-Des Moines in 2017, the book, *Outside In: A History of African-Americans in Iowa, 1838 to 2000* written by Bill Silag, Susan Bridgford and Hal Chase, and multiple documentaries and information produced by Iowa Public Television. These sources provide a wide range of knowledge and historical background to aid in discussions surrounding

race in Iowa. They will be used in this research to provide a historical reference to events in Iowa and be supplemented with a visual comparison of redlining and segregation using ArcGIS, web-mapping and literature.

Extensive and Detailed Literature Review

Iowa and the Federal Government's Discriminatory History

Since its territorial establishment in 1838, Iowa has been predominantly white, but its location in the middle of the country attracted many runaway and freed slaves from Missouri and beyond, who settled in Iowa. Iowa's racial acceptance during the early years of its establishment was not unlike that of the southern Confederate states. Particularly in the southeast corner of Iowa, Iowans held many of the same beliefs about African Americans as places further south, like Missouri. These Iowans saw African Americans as less than human and worthy of unequal treatment based on their racial inferiority. Despite the end of the Civil War in 1865 and Iowa's grant of statehood into the Union, these sentiments and beliefs remained firmly ingrained and were employed into the late 19th century to dehumanize Iowa's African American population.

Racist practices were evident in Iowa's multiple laws and social codes put in place when Iowa became a territory and then a state. In 1838 Iowa inherited the Territory of Michigan's "An Act to Regulate Blacks and Mulattoes, and to Punish the Kidnapping of Such Persons" which prohibited African Americans from settling in the territory without filing with a county clerk "a court-attested certificate of freedom" (Dykstra, 1982; Hill, 1981; Silag, Bridgford, & Chase, 2001). The main intent of this law was to restrict the number of runaway slaves and other African Americans from moving into the state. This first racially based legislation in Iowa, known as Iowa's Black Laws, determined the fate of any African American arriving across its borders. By 1841, the territorial legislature added to the territory's Black Laws by passing a law that prohibited interracial marriage. During this time, there were other constitutional restrictions placed into the Black Laws barring anyone but white males to vote or fight in the militia, and excluded persons

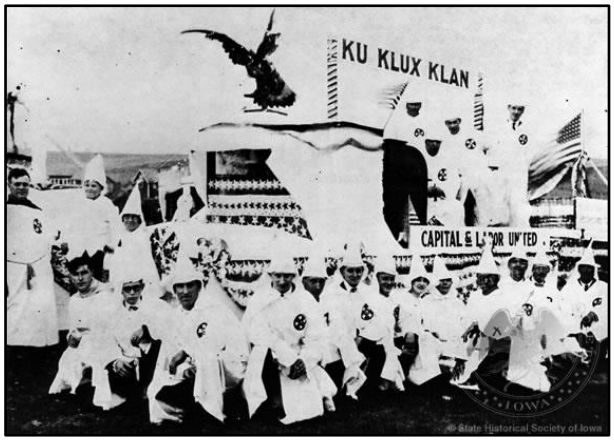
considered “negro, mulatto or Indian” from testifying “in any court or any case against a white person” (Dykstra, 1982). Discussions surrounding black exclusion was an important topic when Iowa applied for statehood in 1854 and again leading up to the enactment o f the 1851 Exclusionary Law in Iowa. The territorial legislator was aware that there could be consequences for excluding African Americans when trying to become a Union state. In 1844, Iowa delegates drafted a Constitution that was sent with “a petition for statehood to the United States Congress” which included the same sentiments promoted in 1838 (Silag et al., 2001: 65). This document barred African Americans from immigration into the state as a way to ensure that blacks would not overrun the new state. Again in February of 1851, Iowa passed an Exclusionary Law, which stated, “[F]rom and after the passage of this act, no free negro or mulatto, shall be permitted to settle in this state” and officials were required to notify offenders to “leave the state within three days” and if they failed they would be arrested (Silag et al., 2001: 67). These types of laws continued to be developed between Iowa’s Statehood in 1846 and end of the Civil War in the late 1860s. Throughout its settlement years, the State of Iowa established a system that was wholly unwelcoming to African Americans. Despite the end of slavery, Iowa society found ways and means to sustain its racist roots.

These early laws in Iowa’s history stayed intact for decades, after the Civil War. Multiple national movements arose that discriminated and segregated African Americans by forcing them to stay in designated areas and to stay out of other areas. Both statewide and nationally, a segregationist concept known as “Sundown Towns” came into practice in the 1890s and lasted until the 1980s. These were towns that either legally or illegally told African Americans that they should not be in their town after dark or bad things would happen to them. Interestingly, this type of racism was assumed by Midwesterners to be a product of the South, however, “it was actually rare” (Kilen, 2006). James Loewen, author of *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism*, traveled around Iowa, and while unable to research all cities in the state, studied census numbers and used local histories to figure out if the towns could have been sundown towns (Kilen, 2006). Based on his research, he concluded there were approximately 44 possible sundown towns in Iowa. One rural town, New Market, Iowa, was said to be a sundown town by locals and James Loewen, when Loewen visited Taylor County in researching his book. A

Des Moines Register article from 2006, notes that "other communities, including at least two in Taylor County, had city ordinances barring blacks from the town after dark" (Kilen, 2006). New Market is said to have had a sundown ordinance in place until the 1980s, and it is believed that "it wasn't until 1985 when they finally took the signs down, because it was on the books" (Interview, 2019). It is clear that many towns in Iowa restricted the number of blacks that lived within their communities.

Around 1920, the KKK gained strength in Iowa as the Klan really appealed "to people who believed their beliefs were superior to the beliefs of immigrants, Catholics, Jews or 'colored people'". In Iowa, there were many followers in Davenport, Waterloo, Sioux City, Ottumwa and Des Moines, as well as other in smaller communities across the state. Resident, Mr. Clair Rudison, Jr., recalls his parents talking about a parade where KKK members marched through "Windsor Heights right down University" and he also mentioned that it was a normal parade, "everyone having a good time, hamburgers, hot dogs, apple pie America" (Interview, 2019). The peak of KKK activity in Iowa was in 1924 when "many towns and cities experienced cross-burnings, Klan parades and political activism" (Interview, 2019). Mr. Clair Rudison, Jr. also recalled his father telling him that when he lived in Marshalltown, "[his father] remembers when they had church service and the Klan came in. Right while they had church. Night service and here's a cross burning in the yard of the church" (2019). The KKK had a prominent influence on white society in Iowa. While the KKK did not last long in Iowa, dying down around the 1930s, the impact it had on the both black and white communities was profound.

Image 1: KKK Meeting in Sioux City, Iowa (n.d.)



Source: Iowa Public Television taken from State Historical Society of Iowa

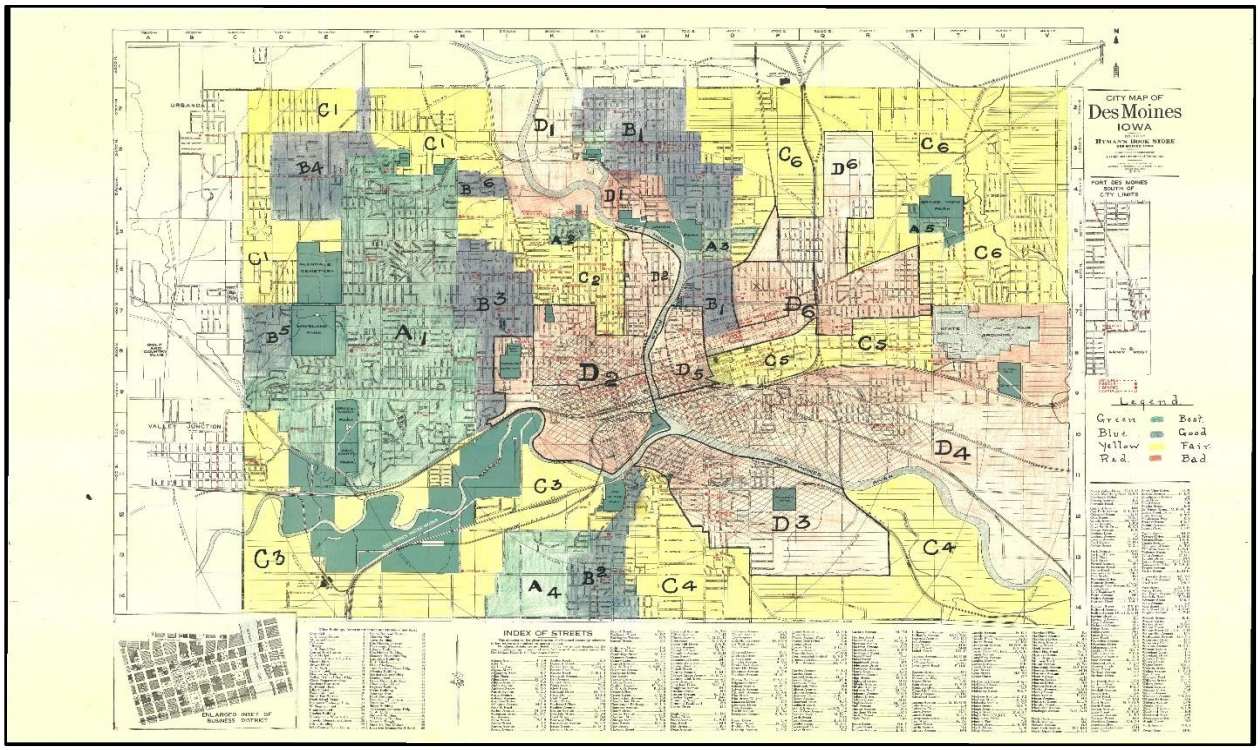
The Great Depression hit the United States hard between 1929 and 1938. While all groups of people were impacted by the financial crisis, African Americans were one of the groups who suffered most. They lost economic and occupation progress. During the Great Depression the black population in Iowa decreased from 19,005 in 1920 to 17,380 by 1930 (Hill, 1981). One of

the first groups to experience the initial stages leading up to the Great Depression, blacks faced massive unemployment with a 50% unemployment rate - 7,931 employed out of 14,426 black persons living in the major cities in Iowa- and a lack of migration to the state (Hill, 1981). The Great Depression aided segregationist efforts to bar African Americans from obtaining homes and being pushed to certain areas of cities in that federal agencies and local governments enacted polices and laws that legalized segregation and discrimination in housing and mortgage lending.

In June of 1933, the Federal Government created an entity named the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) which was tasked with providing funds "for refinancing urban mortgages in danger of default and grant[ing] lower-interest loans for former owners who had lost their homes through foreclosure to enable them to regain their properties" (Massey & Denton, 1993: 51). The HOLC, however, took their program to a new level by establishing the discriminatory practice, now known today as redlining, which evaluated risks related to loans made to specific neighborhoods that were predominantly populated by African Americans and other minorities (Massey & Denton, 1993). The general concept of redlining was to use a four category, color-coding system to identify which areas should receive good loans for mortgages and which should not be granted good loans or any loans at all. HOLC used the colors red, yellow, blue, and green: red was marked as hazardous (predominantly African American), yellow was marked as declining (largely still African American depending on the city), blue was marked as desirable (homogenous) and green was marked as best (white only) (Fleury, 2017). Although it was not the creator of the racial standards in real estate, HOLC was the first federal program to bureaucratize racial profiling in real estate lending and apply that practice on a large scale (Massey & Denton, 1993: 52). This systemic segregation and discrimination were supported and authorized by the federal government. Redlining became an overt racist practice that not only was supported by the federal government but became the lending norm used by a majority of the American population. In the 1936, HOLC created a financial risk map for the City of Des Moines, depicting which areas of the City of the Des Moines were deemed high risk areas to low risk areas based on economic benefit and racial composition.

In general, as redlining maps were produced, surveys were then circulated to different lending agencies and banks to obtain data to track and study their level of recovery of housing sales in the areas for which loans were provided after the Great Depression (Williamson, 1936). Such a survey for Des Moines explicitly stated that most people want to keep "the infiltration of the colored population" in check, that "it might be possible to confine these negro families to more definite areas if such low-cost housing was constructed" and that it could "help decrease the adverse effect that minority groups have" (Williamson, 1936). One survey interviewee from the John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance Company and Private Mortgage Broker noted that the company restricted their "loans to the better sections and [would] not go into south Des Moines, that is, C-3, C-4 or D-3, southeast Des Moines or straight east of D-1 and we are not favorable to north Des Moines except the Union Park district" (Williamson, 1936). The redlining map of Des Moines allowed lenders and banks to ensure certain neighborhoods stayed white and flourished, while other specified areas retained and suppressed minority residents and their deteriorating homes.

Image 2: Home Owners' Loan Corporation Map of Des Moines, IA 1936



Source: Richard Nelson, Digital Scholarship Lab, University of Richmond, 2018.

While HOLC Maps were developed at the federal level, private banks, during the 1930s and 1940s, depended heavily on those maps, along with their own residential security maps, to make loan decisions in their communities. Redlining maps encouraged banks, based on risk, to legally channel funding and development away from African American neighborhoods, ultimately causing these areas to become dilapidated and worthless. White residents did not want those considered "other" living in or near their neighborhoods. With the development of this new tool to discriminate, lenders and white homeowners, as borrowers, residents both secretly and openly supported the separation of racial groups.

Congress passed the National Housing Act of 1934, to "relieve unemployment and stimulate the release of private credit in the hands of the banks and lending institutions for home repairs and construction" (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development). This law also created the Federal Housing Administration, commonly known as the FHA, which became the main agency to handle mortgage insurance. While FHA related laws were generally successful in a larger context after the Great Depression, they did not produce positive outcomes for minorities who were among the most adversely affected by the country's economic decline. The time between the Great Depression and World War II saw massive housing development as construction costs and mortgages were increasingly cheaper for a large portion of the population. However, when World War II began, this type of construction was halted due to the need to support defense spending. Although we were fighting in the war and most legislation being discussed during that time was war related, in 1944 the Veteran's Administration "home loan program" was authorized ensuring "millions of single-family and mobile home loans" (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development). This program impacted the housing market and allowed for major growth outside of cities.

The FHA changed the housing finance system in the United States making it much easier for people to have access to homeownership, which increasingly became much less expensive than renting during the 1940s (Schwartz, 2015). Ultimately, the FHA revived the housing industry during and after the Great Depression and through the post-war period. In order to lift communities up and improve the physical environment, the FHA "developed strict standards" for those neighborhoods with the right kind of properties FHA was willing to fund through mortgages

(Schwartz, 2015: 73). These standards included a variety of specific criteria to measure neighborhood quality and decide which areas were deemed "right" or "wrong". As it turned out in practice, these standards only fit the right kinds of properties which were inevitably located outside minority neighborhoods. In 1935, the FHA produced a document titled *Underwriting Handbook* in which it adopted neighborhood evaluation criteria which bluntly stated that "incompatible racial groups should not be permitted to live in the same communities" as white residents, as well as recommending that highways be "a good way to separate African American from white neighborhoods"(Gross & Rothstein, 2017). This document also stated that "[n]atural or artificially established barriers [would] prove effective in protecting a neighborhood and the locations within it from adverse influences,… includ[ing] prevention of the infiltration of…lower class occupancy, and inharmonious racial groups" (Rothstein, 2017). The FHA did not attempt to hide racial undertones of this document and made it explicitly clear that race mattered in their decision to provide financial assistance and, more generally, where they wanted different people to live. The agency did not invent redlining and racial discrimination in our country, but it decided to go along with already established real estate practices even though the agency was in a good position to "reform these practices, with mortgage insurance providing powerful leverage". As fair housing advocate Charles Abrams wrote, "from its inception FHA set itself up as the protector of the all-white neighborhood. It sent its agents into the field to keep negroes and other minorities from buying houses in white neighborhoods" (Schwartz, 2015: 75). The FHA fostered embedded segregation and discrimination into our society and its public policy.

The impressive revival of the housing industry during the 1930s and 1940s was connected with a variety of other factors which impacted where individuals could and could not live, including low cost of purchasing homes, the ability to get loans, the rise in racial fear, and the justification by the FHA for its racial policies. In particular, the FHA promoted "white flight" by causing fear among white residents that their property values would decrease if African Americans moved into their neighborhoods (Rothstein, 2017b). White flight became a nationwide exodus of white families moving from urban areas, which were predominantly populated by minorities, to homogenous suburban living. This movement continued to over

many years and in 1945 a new bill was passed that made the separation even more permanent and pervasive. This bill was the GI Bill which established the Veterans Administration to provide benefits "to veterans from World War II", providing opportunities for them and their families to improve economically and socially through housing loans and medical benefits (Gross & Rothstein, 2017; U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development). While this benefited a large portion of the veteran population, African American veterans were excluded from these benefits and could not obtain housing loans through the GI Bill. The GI Bill, while not designed as housing policy, strictly excluded African Americans from obtaining housing outside of the urban core and ultimately played a critical role in the segregation of African Americans across the United States. Richard Rothstein, author of *Color of Law*, notes that the Veteran's Administration "adopted all of the FHA racial exclusion programs" and together these programs made it such that African Americans were "not permitted to move into areas that the Federal Housing Administration and the Veterans Administration had designated for whites"(Gross & Rothstein, 2017).

Image 3: FDR Signing the BI Bill in 1944

Source: Wikipedia

Between 1947 and 1956 the federal government developed programs and laws that would increase construction of housing, improve urban centers, and generate public housing. In 1949, the federal government enacted another housing act (the "1949 Act"), which authorized "funds to localities to assist in slum clearance and urban development, new construction" and other infrastructure items including vacant land, open assets, facilities, sewer facilities and water facilities (Gross & Rothstein, 2017). With white flight in cities across the United States, the 1949 Act's major funding strategies for slum clearance and development were a direct attack on the minority populations within the area and on the low-income working men and women who were unable to move to the suburbs. The 1949 Act empowered the government, both federal and

local, to decide which areas were considered slums and make the decision where new development would be most impactful. Generally, those areas deemed unwanted or ghettos were areas with higher concentrations of African Americans and other minorities, including the poor working class. While the 1949 Act provided new construction opportunities for cities in blighted areas, an amendment in 1954 brought to the fore the term “urban renewal”, a concept meant to increase destruction of blighted areas, but also larger public efforts to revitalize inner cities (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development). This amendment promoted the idea of public housing development for low-income and minority populations, an initiative that, over time, actually placed minority groups into worse conditions than before because the public housing developments were not maintained. Again, in 1956, another housing law amendment was passed that authorized payment to people displaced by urban renewal and in need of relocation (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development).

In the mindset of these federal legislative initiatives related to lending and housing in the 1940s and 1950s, redlining was in full swing. As more African Americans were living in Iowa’s larger cities became more and more segregated and over racism and discrimination were the norm. Much of this African American population settled in or moved to areas deemed unworthy for whites. By the end of the 1950s, the federal government started to fund projects across the United States in support of advancement and progress. These Urban Renewal projects aimed at developing the interstate system and helping cities clear areas of their cities that were “blighted” and run down, so they could be rebuilt into better, more modern areas. The rise in urban renewal projects across the entire country came to Des Moines around 1957, when discussions about new highways and the clearing of neighborhoods for new developments arose. In Des Moines, the urban renewal process worked its way through predominately low-income and African American neighborhoods, whose residents were treated without respect in terms of good communication and aid in finding new housing.

One of the largest Urban Renewal projects in Des Moines was the construction of I-235 which runs directly through the center of Des Moines (East to West). It was constructed starting in 1957, being completed in October of 1968 (Hancock, 2016). Des Moines started many Urban Renewal projects in 1957, which impacted a large number of neighborhoods, particularly those that were predominantly African American. One such neighborhood was Sherman Hill located west of Downtown. Sherman Hill had seen disinvestment in the mid-20th century as white flight took hold. With redlining pushing residents of color to certain parts of the city, Sherman Hill became an African American neighborhood with a cultural and economic epicenter along Center Street. The area became known as a "ghetto" and the black side of town to whites in the city. In the 1960s, the Interstate 235 project and the Oakridge Area Urban Renewal Project, displaced and destroyed substantial sections of the black community. The Oakridge project destroyed many buildings determined to be "deficient" and affordable, displacing over 180 people who had nowhere to go. In 1966 the Des Moines Area Council of Churches discussed the potential for a non-profit "housing community that could serve the needs of low-income families in Des Moines", specifically those displaced by the Oakridge Project (*Sherman Hill Neighborhood Plan*, 2017).

Image 4: View of Construction of I-235 in Des Moines, IA

Source: Google; Pinterest

The Center Street area provided a variety of opportunities for the African American population, for example, enjoying “music at the Billiken, 1113, and Sepia nightclubs, among several others” and a “neighborhood ‘brimmed with activity,’ wrote journalist and historian Raymond Kelso Weikal. ‘And its music flowed like flood waters’ “ (Fehn & Jefferson, 2010). As most of the black economic, social and cultural life was held on or near Center Street, and when the interstate was constructed black businesses and venues were disintegrated and an area that had once “served and supported the black community” was bulldozed without a second thought (Fehn & Jefferson, 2010). In the thick of urban renewal around 1967, black residents being displaced grew frustrated and upset with the city council for not providing a good housing option and a smooth relocation process. Those displaced received low appraisals for their homes and businesses and were upset that the city did not provide them enough relocation compensation to buy comparable homes somewhere else in the city (Fehn & Jefferson, 2010).

Image 5: Center Street

Source: (Parker, 2011)

An article from the Des Moines Register in 1959 notes the NAACP protested the discrimination and lofty pricing of new housing due to the displacement of African Americans because of Urban Renewal projects. The construction of Interstate 235 would eventually bulldoze close to one-mile through the midtown area displacing around 400 families, many of whom were African Americans (Shane, 1959) . An interviewed individual noted that the “freeway office had not kept its promise to give her another month to move to a house”, and another family stated “We were paid only $5,500 for our three-bed room house and now are forced to buy a two-bedroom house, not as good, for $9,500. When I checked with the urban renewal board officials, I found that there were racial restrictions noted in their listings” (Shane, 1959). The main problem facing African Americans was limited housing supply for their color and when they tried to find housing they had to pay more because of their race.

As part of the Urban Renewal process, the federal government was required to aid those displaced or facing displacement in finding housing. The Council of Social Agencies that a “major obstacle in the effective operation of an urban renewal program was to find adequate housing for all displaced families within the price range which the families could afford“ (Committee, 1962). It noted that while there were 212 rental vacancies in Des Moines, only 1% were available to African Americans, and if they applied for a rental property the price of said property increased drastically, for example from $65 to $80 (Committee, 1962). Due to these limitations, moving anywhere that offered similar housing or better was impossible and forced many African American families to live in areas with substandard housing. Along with the issues of unaffordable, in adequate housing for African Americans, the Urban Renewal staff did not provide communication to families being displaced, resulting in many families having “moved before they could receive help from the Urban Renewal Staff because of a lack of information as to their status” (Committee, 1962). Urban Renewal staff needed to take responsibility to keep those families informed about when displacement would happen and the options they had to secure standard housing, however they were naive in how to deal with different racial groups they were positioned to aid (Committee, 1962). This lack of communication led to hundreds of families being displaced without warning and without support from the government.

When the River Hills neighborhood faced Interstate 235 urban renewal challenges, the staff presented a table which showed the distribution of African Americans throughout that urban renewal area. This found that 43% of nonwhite households were in the urban renewal area and of that number, 12% of the nonwhites living there resided in houses (Committee, 1962).

Image 6: Number of Nonwhite Heads of Households in Urban Renewal Areas

	Urban Renewal Area		Total	Census	
				Tracts 23	Tracts 24
Heads of Households Nonwhite	1,085	(43%)	2,498	1,602	896 (108-12)
Head of Primary Family	681	(43%)	1,581	1,147	434
Primary Individual	404	(44%)	917	455	462

Source: (Committee, 1962)

Urban renewal disrupted and dissolved large portions of African American neighborhoods throughout Des Moines. Poor communication from Urban Renewal staff, African Americans were segregated into more dense areas than before. They were unable to find adequate housing in good neighborhoods as white realtors and residents made it impossible to move past certain boundary markers. This moment in time is described by one Des Moines black resident as their "9/11" (Fehn & Jefferson, 2010).

During the surge of urban renewal activity and the rise in public housing developments across the country, in the 1960s, Des Moines considered at great length the development of public housing and a low-rent housing program in the city. While any such public housing and subsequent programs would have greatly benefited the community, the state legislature defeated the proposed bill in 1962. Again, in 1963, another bill was proposed for open occupancy housing to allow all residents to live anywhere in the city, but that was also defeated despite the legislature approving a similar bill a few years earlier for urban renewal tracts (Silag et al., 2001).

The 1950s-60s were a time of racial dissonance. Congress passed the Civil Rights Act in 1964, and the Fair Housing Act in 1968, the latter intending to prohibit "discrimination in housing

based on a person's race, color, religion, gender, disability, familial status, or national origin" (*Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice for the State of Iowa*, 2014; 1). However, despite this expressed intent, Congress ensured there would be "an unworkable enforcement mechanism" which, in practice, gave HUD limited power to help those who suffered discrimination (Lamb, 2005: 22). The Fair Housing Act processing of complaints alleging discrimination in housing was ineffective and the monitoring of cities for segregated neighborhoods was deficient. The Fair Housing Act's weakness in enforcement caused some turmoil within Congress as many committees tried to come to a consensus about what should be done (Meyer, 2000). However, the hearings were never enough to make any substantial change (Meyer, 2000). The Fair Housing Act continued to segregate and discriminate against African Americans on what they claimed to be an economic basis, due their poor credit, not a racialized one. While the Fair Housing Act had good intentions on the surface, the racism imbedded in our society and specifically in the mortgage lending and real estate practices would not allow for the laws to be implemented and used to their written potential and for their intended purposes.

When considering discriminatory practices in housing, the financial aspect is often overlooked. Loans and insurance are typically seen as initial steps people must take to purchase a home and that such actions have nothing to do with race. That, however, is not the case. Minorities are more often denied or receive less consideration for a loan to either purchase a home or secure a rental. Today in the United States, African Americans on average receive "denials 19.3 percent of the time" for conventional home-purchase loans, and in FHA markets "Blacks' applications were rejected at a 17.9 percent rate" (Harney, 2018). In Polk County, African Americans are denied 24% more often compared to the county average at 11.3% (AALFDSM, 2017). These statistics show that the lending practices today continue to follow the practices done for years by using different ways to subtly discriminate through an economic lens, not unlike that which was created by the FHA in 1935.

The Fair Housing Act of 1968 offered a promise that oppressive tactics such as discriminatory lending practices and housing sale practices would be ended. At the time of its passage, "outright refusal to rent or sell to blacks became rare, given that overt discrimination could lead to lawsuits and prosecution under the Fair Housing Law. Realtors were no longer free

to reject black clients as they walked through the door" (Massey & Denton, 1993). However, this did not change the underlying systemic racism within these practices. While overt racial practices lessened, a new type of discrimination emerged in the housing market, which aimed at maintaining residentially segregated areas. This new discrimination was subtle, virtually unrecognizable by potential minority renters or homebuyers; "minority homeseekers may not even be aware that they have been discriminated against since they are generally treated courteously and told about at least one available house or apartment" (Turner & Ross, 2005). Despite receiving a smile and being shown a few properties, minority home seekers were deceived by landlords and rental agencies who, "through a series of ruses, lies, and deceptions, [made] it hard for [minority individuals] to learn about, inspect, rent or purchase homes in white neighborhoods" (Massey & Denton, 1993). The covert discriminatory practices of racial steering, information steering, and personal discrimination, described below, shaped a segregated housing market to counter the efforts of the FHA in America.

The discriminatory practice of racial steering occurred when potential renters or buyers were shown different properties in specific communities based on their race, religion, gender, or any other protected class. This practice included the systematic guidance of minority customers to a neighborhood compatible "with respect to social and economic characteristics, especially racial composition" (Massey & Denton, 1993). Realtors diverted African American home seekers to areas with larger black populations as they wanted to maintain the white areas white. They also had an assumption that African Americans wanted to live with the same race. Because racial steering is a form of overt racism, it is not a widely used practice today as there are other more subtle ways to steer people from certain areas and into others (Massey & Denton, 1993).

Information steering is another subtle discriminatory practice which occurs when "whites get information about a wide diversity of neighborhoods while minorities are limited to just a few" (Turner & Ross, 2005). It also occurs when minorities are not given the same information as whites when inquiring about a rental or home. Information steering is a widely employed, discriminatory practice because of its subtle nature. Information disseminated by newspapers, landlords and realty companies may contain misinformation, and a minority person may not know they have been discriminated against unless the deception is discovered.

Similarly, personal discrimination is another form of prejudice which holds that most white individuals would rather live separately from minorities. Substantial "literature on discrimination indicates that a housing agent might deny blacks access to housing because of his [or her] own prejudice or because of the prejudice of his white customers" (Yinger, 1986). Although minorities seldom face realtors who are "free to reject black clients as they walked through the door" or experienced signs such as "white only" or "no niggers allowed," a systematic and evident prejudice remains throughout white America (Massey & Denton, 1993). Personal discrimination is commonly related to financial considerations that operate to disrupt the business relationship between landlords or agents and their existing and potential tenants. As economist John Yinger observes, "the primary cause of racial discrimination in housing is that housing agents illegally promote their economic interests by catering to the racial prejudice of their current or potential white customers" (Yinger, 1986). Personal discrimination plays a significant role in housing discrimination that takes place today.

Iowa's Complexity

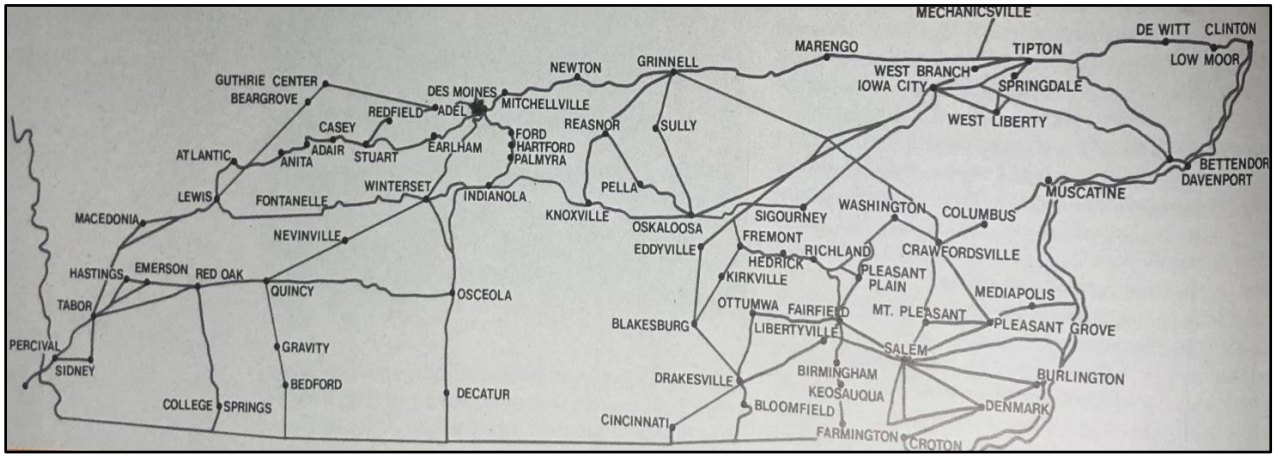
While many laws passed both in the state and nationally had a serious negative impact on the African American community of Des Moines, it must be recognized that the issue of race and discrimination in Iowa, since becoming a territory, is very complex. Throughout its history, Iowans, both white and black, have resisted in different forms against racism and segregation put in place by fellow residents, state officials or the federal government.

Early in its existence, in the 1850s, antislavery Iowans and abolitionists worked to reverse laws and bring more equality to Iowa. However, in 1857, the antislavery movement had not made an impact and Iowa voters rejected "a proposition to strike the word 'white' from the state constitutional provision regarding suffrage" as newspapers "had struck fear into the minds of many readers with editorials predicting that blacks would dominate a state with black suffrage" (Stone, 1990). While those aspects were not positive, there were other changes in the Iowa bill of rights that gave African Americans some legal status by "expanding the right for blacks to a trial by jury and the right to testify in court" (Stone, 1990). They worked hard to change people's

minds about African Americans during a time in Iowa when most state representatives and residents wanted to exclude them from the state.

Similarly, in the 1850s, after the Fugitive Slave Act was passed, the Underground Railroad in Iowa became active. The Underground Railroad in Iowa was never an organized system as it was in other parts of the United States, even though many prominent members in the state were part of concealing slaves and helping them escape capture (Silag et al., 2001). There is an incomplete list of 116 agents in Iowa who took part in the Underground Railroad. These individuals who aided slaves across the State of Iowa were heroes and heroines, as they risked not only their lives but the lives of those they were helping. Des Moines was part of the Underground Railroad system which provided a network for slaves to flee the south and cross into free states, such as Iowa. An abolitionist by the name of John Brown "escorted a group through the city in 1858" while others housed the slaves as they made their journey to Canada (Lufkin, 1980).

Image 7: Underground Railroad Route in Iowa



Source: Outside In: African-American History in Iowa 1838-2000, 50.

Between 1865 and 1880, the State of Iowa looked to amend its constitution by "striking out the word WHITE in the article on suffrage" (Silag et al., 2001). While there was opposition to this change, many were in favor. It took many years and elections of new officials to get this legislative amendment passed, as under the "Iowa constitution of 1857, a constitutional amendment had to be approved by two successive General Assemblies and then ratified in a

popular referendum" (Silag et al., 2001). It was a tricky system to get anything amended, but election after election the Republican elected governors pushed for the adoption of a black suffrage amendment. In 1868, the amendment passed both the House and the Senate and black men had won the right to vote and were automatically eligible to be jurors (Silag et al., 2001). This was a start to ending discrimination in Iowa's Constitution, which became discrimination free by 1880.

Starting in the 1880s, Iowa's coal industry boomed bringing in a large black population to work in the mines across the entire state. Instead of being concentrated to a few bigger cities, they were spread across the entire state. It is noted that in Des Moines and the surrounding townships coal mine owners "readily sought Negroes to labor in their mines" and that "from 1900 to 1925, more black males worked in Polk County's numerous mines than in any other single occupation" (Lufkin, 1980) . Mining was an occupation in Iowa that had a high percentage of African American labor and many became involved in the United Mine Workers Union. It is said that "a black representative of Polk County even attended the state miner's convention as early as 1900" and in the years to follow more African American delegates went to both the state and national conventions (Lufkin, 1980). In Southern Iowa, small mining towns such as Buxton, a "town of about 6,000 formed around 1900", was predominantly black and both races lived together between 1900 and 1924 when the mine closed (Stone, 1990). The town of Buxton is a good example of how, despite discriminatory state and federal laws, a small town could provide "racial harmony and integration" with a "unique multi-ethnic community" and deliver equal wages for all miners no matter the color of their skin ("Buxton: Iowa's Black Utopia"). Buxton shows that while segregation was taking over the country and Jim Crow Laws were being put into effect, Buxton did not enforce those laws and beliefs. They were able to have equal access to all public accommodations and "did not have to settle for the worst living conditions or undesired residence" (Gray, 1984).

In 1883, the Supreme Court of the United States declared an 1857 federal act guaranteeing equal accommodations in "inns, public conveyances, theaters, and other places of amusement" unconstitutional (Silag et al., 2001). This left many African Americans worried. So, in March of 1884, the Iowa General Assembly with support and push from Governor Buren R.

Sherman, passed the Iowa Civil Rights Act of 1884. This Act "forbade segregation in such places as inns, public conveyance, barbershops, theatres and other places of amusement" (Lufkin, 1980). Iowa was one of thirteen states in the United States to pass a law like this in the 1800s (Stone, 1990). It should be noted, however, that despite this push for equality in the public realm, the act was rarely used to address issues of civil rights violations between 1884-1923 (Silag et al., 2001). And while it was amended in 1923 to encourage more "frequent prosecutions, the enforcement mechanism remained ineffectual for African-Americans seeking equal accommodations" (Silag et al., 2001).

In 1915, Iowa's first National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) branch was established in Des Moines. Some of the main purposes of the NAACP is to address the struggles African Americans face in the United States. The Des Moines branch addressed a variety of issues in the city and in the 1940s when they looked back at what they had achieved it was found, "separate bathing beaches had ended", of three public schools, "two frequently predominantly by whites were open to blacks and the third predominantly black, had black lifeguards", an "African American served on the Polk County Grand Jury" and "black employees worked for the county, the city and the state in more than just menial positions" (Silag et al., 2001). They have been active since their creation and are still extremely active today. The NAACP provided help for African Americans being discriminated against in Iowa. They have and continue to be an integral part of the resistance against discrimination and racism in Iowa.

Moving forward to the 1950s, the Des Moines Tribune in 1956 housed an incredible reporter named Robert Spiegel, who pushed to write articles over a short period about discrimination and segregation that African Americans struggle with daily in Des Moines. He "wrote a series of stories on segregated housing, which he felt was the most important writing of his career" ("Robert Spiegel Obituary," 2009). His articles were done at a time when discussing race and the quality of life for African Americans was not seen positively by white Iowans. However, he knew how important this topic was and that stories about the discrimination of black families in Des Moines needed to be heard. Below are images of some of the titles from his articles which provide anecdotal information from both the African American families being segregated and from the white realtors or landlords.

Image 8: Titles of Newspaper Articles by Robert Spiegel, 1956

Real Estate Broker Is the Man in the Middle On Negro Housing Question in Des Moines

TAKEN TO HOUSES IN CERTAIN AREAS

Des Moines Tribune Page 8

Tells of 'Normal Experience' of Negro Seeking Home

'YOUR SKIN DETERMINES WHERE YOU LIVE'

Des Moines Tribune Page 9

Now They Can Afford a Nicer Home—But Color Is a Barrier

A Penetrating Look at Negro Housing Here; Segregation Nearly 100% Effective

ECONOMIC ANGLE

Price, Too, Is Big Factor In Negro Housing Here

THE OLD STORY

A Negro Family Moves In: Homes Put Up for Sale

FAMILY OF 5

Negro Surgeon's Fruitless Search For House Here

Source: Newspapers.com, Des Moines Tribune, 1956

The articles depict the regularity behind the segregation of African Americans in Des Moines and the excuses or misrepresentations used by white neighbors and realtors/landlords as to why black families were not welcome in certain parts of the city. In 1956, Spiegel received the Sidney Hillman Foundation award for this work. While these articles accomplish much in terms of policy chance or adoption his reporting brought direct attention to this important issue on a white newspaper and white audience.

On April 29, 1965, the Iowa legislature approved the Iowa Civil Rights Act and (Silag et al., 2001). This act created the Iowa Civil Rights Commission, which "was empowered to hold hearings and to rule on complaints of unfair of discriminatory practice in public accommodations and employment because of race, creed, color, national origin, or religion" (Silag et al., 2001). In 1967 the Iowa Civil Rights Act of 1965 was amended to include the Discrimination in Housing Act, which added that "discrimination in the sale or lease of housing or real property as an unfair or discriminatory practice" (Silag et al., 2001). The law specifically notes,

> It shall be an unfair or discriminatory practice for any person, owner, or person acting for an owner, …: (a) To refuse to sell, rent, lease assign, sublease, refute to negotiate, or to otherwise make unavailable, or deny any real property or housing accommodation or part, portion, or interest therein, to any person because of the race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender, identity, religion, national origin, disability or familial status of such person. (*CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION*, n.d.)

These laws helped to make a step forward in Iowa to provide equal opportunity and equal rights to all its residents.

While the Iowa Civil Rights Act of 1965 combatted discrimination against African Americans in Des Moines, its effectiveness after enactment was not positive and the implementation of the act was not properly done. African Americans protested continuing discrimination and, in 1966, a park located north of downtown was the site of a large riot with young African Americans and police. Good Park (1155 17th street, Des Moines, IA 50314) was the main hangout for kids and teenagers since the early 1940s. The park contained a wading pool, shelter, basketball courts and lots of green space to play. The young people involved in the riot were triggered by the incessant confrontation and discrimination by the police. When the riot

happened in Good Park in July 1966, some of the young people involved told the Des Moines Register reporters that "there was not enough for them to do at night. Some complained of the inability to find jobs; others expressed concern about the rough police treatment" (Fehn & Jefferson, 2010). The riots occurred "at a time when perceptions of police brutality were sparking riots in many American cities. African Americans, many stuck in northern urban ghettos with few economic opportunities, grew impatient with the slow progress of the mainstream civil rights movement" (Fehn & Jefferson, 2010). This riot came at a time when African Americans were starting to be infused by the rhetoric of black power, which would become more prominent a couple of years later.

Another active African American organization in Iowa emerged in Des Moines around 1968. This organization was the Black Panther Party, led by Mary Rem, a young woman who had left Des Moines "in 1967 just after her high school graduation" and had "headed for Oakland, California" where the headquarters of the Black Panther Party was growing (Anderson, 2005). In 1968, she came back to Des Moines and along with Charles Knox, founded the Black Panther Party with the intention of promoting and developing "black power in the community" which meant "the economic, political and cultural control of the black community by black people" (Fehn & Jefferson, 2010). The Des Moines BBP chapter understood and used the practices established by the national BBP in California, but only addressed the things that were relevant to African Americans in Des Moines. The party only lasted until 1970, but its influence on the Des Moines, both black and white, was evident. It is said that while the larger community was "uncomfortable with black power rhetoric" it was acknowledged "that the party's programs, demonstrations, and posturing spurred the city toward more equitable employment of black citizens" (Fehn & Jefferson, 2010).

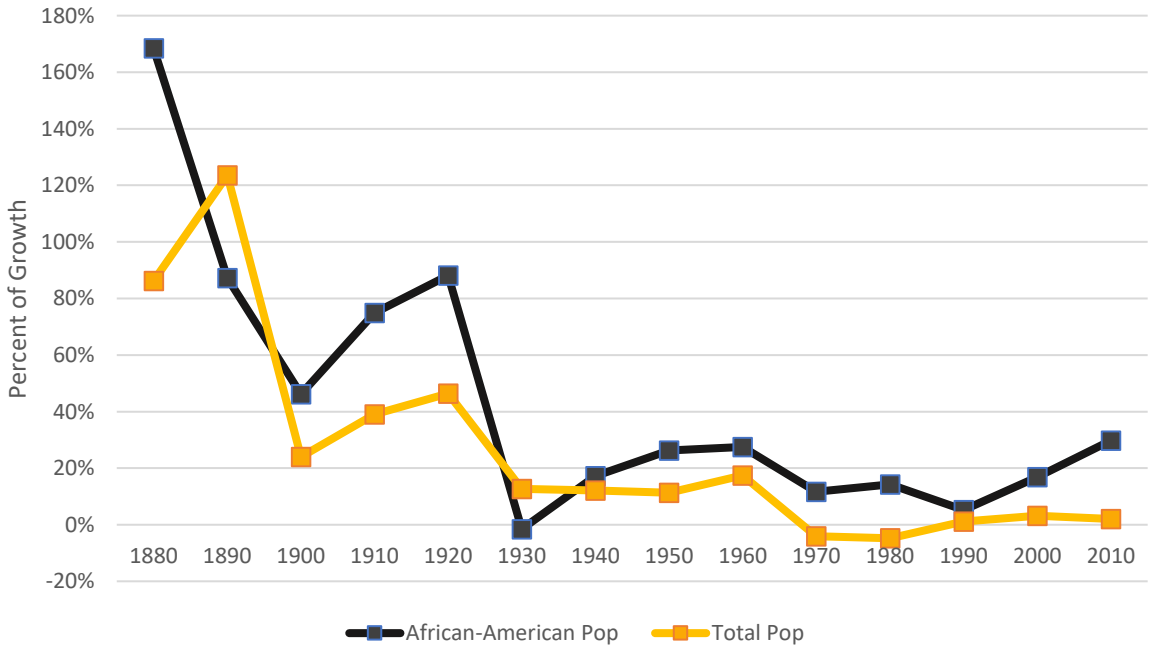
While these were not the only actions taken by the state of Iowa or by groups of people or by individuals championing civil rights and equality, they provide good examples of how Iowa was divided on issues of race and how the State's history of is very complex. The historical complexity surrounding race discussions and action in the state of Iowa has left a lasting impact on the landscape of the City of Des Moines. While people today keep fighting for civil rights and equality, it remains evident that policies and planning actions of elected officials have not

produced sufficient change to benefit African Americans and their communities in Des Moines. A commitment must follow to identify what changes are needed and what actions address longstanding, racially based injustices that continue to mark the lives of African Americans in Des Moines.

Iowa Today

Des Moines, Iowa is a city of around 200,000 residents, the capital of Iowa, and the center of a growing metropolitan area of over 650,000 people. The city has the largest African American population of all major cities in Iowa with an estimated 23,727 residents in 2017 (The State Data Center of Iowa, 2019). The growth of the African American population compared to the Total Population in Des Moines between 1880-2010 can be seen in Figure 1. This graph shows that the African American population fluctuated over the years, but has continued to grow steadily since the 1990s, compared to the total population which has stayed stagnant since that same time.

Figure 1: African American Population and Total Population Percent of Growth, 1880-2010



Source: (Census, 1880; Census, 2000-2010; Gibson & Jung, 2005; Silag, Bridgford, & Chase, 2001)

As a state, Iowa, in 2010, ranked 3rd in racial disparity in incarceration rates for black and white U.S. residents with an 11.1:1 ratio of African American prisoners to White prisoners respectively ("State-by-State Data | The Sentencing Project,"). Similarly, while comprising only 3 percent of Iowa's total population, African Americans make up 23 percent of the incarcerated population in Iowa's prisons. With approximately 3,473 African Americans per 100,000 people in the same racial group, African Americans are one of the most concentrated racial group in the state ("Overrepresentation of Blacks in Iowa | Prison Policy Initiative"). Disturbingly, in 2017, the poverty rate of African American Iowans reached 32.3 percent compared to the overall state rate of 10.7 percent. The percentage of African American families in poverty with related children under 18 was 39.6 percent compared to 10.9 percent of Iowa's total population (The State Data Center of Iowa & The Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans, 2019). Within Polk County, African American residents in 2017 experienced an unemployment rate of 16.7 percent compared to the "overall county unemployment rate of 3.5 percent" (AALFDSM, 2017: 21). Also in 2017, African Americans made up 26 percent of the population living in the Des Moines urban core, only 4 percent were located throughout the Des Moines/West Des Moines Metro and, of the total county population, only 5 percent were African American (AALFDSM, 2017: 21).

One of the most "widely used measures of segregation in sociological research" is the dissimilarity index which loos at the "percentage of an area's demographic group needing to move to another neighborhood to achieve complete integration for the area" ("Segregation Data Methodology," 2019). The Des Moines Metro area's dissimilarity index calculated in 2010 showed a score of 51.6 (Frey, 2010). This dissimilarity means that 51.6 percent of "white people would need to move to another neighborhood to make whites and blacks evenly distributed across all neighborhoods" (Frey & Myers). Race plays a crucial role in determining the success or failure and prosperity or stagnation of different groups across a wide range of areas. As a result, African American Iowans face countless challenges economically and socially that have been imbedded and/or designed to hinder their expectations for economic growth and quality of life.

It must be noted that the City of Des Moines is not unlike other, larger, more diverse cities around the United States that have been the subject of extensive research that attempts to understand and confront the impact and legacy of race inequality and segregation in

metropolitan American communities. Below are four images of Midwest cities that have different population sizes and diversity, but they all show the same important visual. It is visible in each city which areas have higher concentrations of different races. The Dot Density Map, created by Dustin Cable in 2013, shows the distribution of African American (green), Asian (red), Hispanic (orange), White (blue) and Other (brown) races across the entire United States.

Image 9: Racial Dot Density Maps of Chicago, Minneapolis, Des Moines, and St. Louis, 2011

Source: (Cable, 2013)

These images show that segregation and discrimination have left its impact on cities across the nation and these problems must be addressed if these areas are going to become more integrated. There have been many cities taking action to address these issues head on.

The City of Minneapolis, Minnesota has taken steps in its new comprehensive plan to address the issue of race and racist housing practices in the city by eliminating single-family zoning, which "has long perpetuate segregation" (Mervosh, 2018). This will provide needed housing in different areas of the city that have historically only been single family and higher income. The City of Minneapolis's moved to be the first major city in the United States do approve such a change across an entire city and the decision "came as part of a sweeping plan to propel the city into the future by addressing issues like housing, racial equity and climate change" (Mervosh, 2018). Minneapolis is showing that the legacy of racism and discriminatory practices can be addressed through the practice of planning.

This type of change is also being addressed in Portland, Oregon where they are "working on a plan to allow fourplexes in nearly all single-family neighborhoods" (Mervosh, 2018). The City of Portland also enacted an Affordable Housing Preference Policy, which is "heavily informed by the history of the City's urban renewal policies and investments" and the displacement of African Americans, and has worked to address gentrification issues by "giving priority for public funding to household with generational ties to [gentrifying] neighborhoods" (Ahn, Galloway-Popotas, & Nelson, 2015). They give "top priority to households (and their descendants) who owned property that was taken by eminent domain" as part of any urban renewal project by providing priority when "applying for City-funded affordable rental apartments, ownership homes, and down payment assistance for first-time homebuyers" (Ahn et al., 2015). They want to provide as much assistance as they can in the areas that have been taken and are still being taken from low income, minority households.

Similarly, Seattle, Washington is "considering rezoning 6 percent of its single-family neighborhoods to include more housing" (Mervosh, 2018). They have also set up the Community Cornerstones program which aims "to strengthen Seattle's most economically and culturally diverse communities while also welcoming new residents and business" (Ahn et al., 2015). This program brings together community plans that have worked to respond to the pressures of displacement from the newly constructed" light rail service in southeast Seattle" and ensure that communities of color and low-communities participate and benefit "from decisions that shape their own neighborhoods" (Ahn et al., 2015). They are doing positive and impactful community

engagement with the communities that are directly being affected by this new infrastructure. The City of Seattle has also noted in its new comprehensive plan that it will make sure "race and social equity goals" are addressed throughout their plan and that their city growth strategies analyze the impacts of the growth strategies on the most vulnerable populations (Ahn et al., 2015). The City of Seattle is using multiple planning efforts to address the needs of their vulnerable populations using local knowledge, community engagement and good planning tools for future growth.

Planning Theory

The information from the past, along with the statistics from present day Iowa, show that despite efforts by organizations, community groups and civil rights legislation, discrimination and segregation still exist and still impact the African American community in Des Moines, Iowa. This presents an issue for legislators, decision makers and planners in Iowa and Des Moines to address this legacy of segregation and realize how it has impacted the growth of the city and, more importantly, the African American community of Des Moines.

These societal, planning issues must be addressed. Planning and planners must take a stand and start to understand the importance of addressing the past racial experiences of a community in order to better serve it. I view my role and purpose as a planner to address issues of equity and social justice. In my opinion, these are the most important human elements and responsibilities a planner must consider when addressing societal health and the sustainability of a community. Equity and social justice can mean a variety of things to different people. However, as a planner addressing community needs, it is vital that discussions of race, ethnicity and difference become central to any decision made by and for a community. Planners must give a voice to people who are underrepresented in the decision-making process. As planning theorist, John Friedmann, viewed planning through the Utopian ideal with a central focus on radicalism, seeing planning as a means to address existing conditions and find a way to emancipate people from those conditions (Friedmann, 2000). Friedmann's "good city" emphasizes the role of planning in answering the primary question of "for whom is the city" and promoting equity and

justice core principles. Radical planning aims to address and examine those societal inequalities and injustices that interfere with successful planning efforts. To effectively change communities, cities and places, planners must bring issues of equity, justice and difference to the forefront of their planning efforts and outcomes.

A primary goal of planners is to improve and promote a good and affordable quality of life for all residents of the community, which means bringing different groups to the table in community engagement, learning about the history and context of the community and taking time to do research in order to make well-rounded and positive decisions. By bringing in the local history and local knowledge of a place, there is more opportunity to have effective discussions and decisions made for that specific community. This local knowledge is a result of public discussion, argument and reflection between and among decision-makers and the citizenry.

Local knowledge is unique to a community, neighborhood, or place and, as a result, is incapable of an all-encompassing definition. Theorist Jason Corburn suggests that local knowledge is held by communities and groups, gathered through experiences rather than strict data and tested through public forums and stories (Corburn, 2003). This knowledge allows for communities to show planners and decision makers what has occurred over time in certain places, the importance or unimportance of certain areas and allows for the people to suggest ideas that would benefit their communities for the better. As Corburn briefly notes, local knowledge also allows for communities to raise issues that they believe need fixing that go unnoticed by authorities and decision-makers (Corburn, 2003). This knowledge supports credence, focus, understanding, power and authority in decision-making processes.

Planning theorists extol the benefits of using local knowledge, termed, in contrast to sole reliance on expert or trained professional knowledge, a tactic traditionally employed in political and governmental settings. Local knowledge is among the most critical resources accessible to communities to attain sustained, positive outcomes in community development and is advanced by theorists because of its inclusive and equity-based dimensions. Citizens must be included in the planning process and given a sense of citizen power to enact positive change for all. While having people with expertise in development and planning is important, citizens and

professionals must work together in order to produce more positive and effective outcomes. As theorist Ash Amin explains, the approach that must occur depends on involvement from science and politics, all active stakeholders, "distributed responsibility, and the enrolment of expert and lay knowledge, acting in an open, experimental and democratic manner in an uncertain world" (Amin, 2016). However, despite the discussions about the importance of local knowledge and community engagement by theorists, in practice, they are not uniformly utilized.

Planning theorists strive to show that a focus on equality, justice and differences allows for better, more fluid governance to exist for all communities. Theorist Heather Campbell provides a hopefulness, stating that focusing on producing areas and communities for the better actually "opens up a space of possibilities- a range of betters- and the potential for constructive achievement" (Campbell, Malcolm, & Watkins, 2016). There is hope for planners to produce better, more equitable places in the future. There is an opportunity for planning to improve and evolve, to make constructive changes in order to produce the equitable outcomes presented by many of the theorists discussed. Campbell sees that there is a need to change how we approach theory and practice in order to produce better outcomes for all (Campbell et al., 2016).

When looking at the case study of Des Moines and the effects of redlining and segregation on the African American population, it is evident that these items discussed at length in planning theory would provide better outcomes when addressing race and difference in the practice of planning. It is crucial for the larger community to comprehend the racial history of a place because policies that were supposedly deemed illegal in the 1960s have nonetheless left a legacy in city life that, while perhaps not as noticeable, still exists and will endure unless action is taken to address it.

The City of Des Moines and the State of Iowa used federal and local policies to discriminate against African Americans since the 1930s, and, while there has been a multitude of efforts to address discrimination, it is evident today that past racist policies had a significant, adverse impact on the African community of Des Moines. Recent statistics demonstrate a stark difference between African American and white access to opportunities.

Methodology

The main purpose of this study is to provide history and information to the public about how African Americans in Des Moines were steered to live in certain neighborhoods and areas that were not desirable to white residents. Past segregation has had a lasting impact on the African American community, especially in the physical location of where they live and the quality of the built environment. In order to provide a complete, well rounded product, this project applied both qualitative and quantitative research methods. This integrated approach allows the research to address not only the factual and numeric elements of the topic, but the social and emotional aspects which provide experiences to complement the facts.

Quantitative:

One part of this research was to produce a visual comparison of where African Americans live in the City of Des Moines in 1920, 1940, 1970, 2000 and 2010. I collected demographic data from the United States Decennial Census on the Census Bureau website an and from the IPUMS National Historic GIS database for 1940-2010 data. The 1920 demographic data was much harder to locate, as it has not been digitized for the City of Des Moines, Iowa. In order to find this information, I was tasked with finding the original 1920 Census documents. I was able to locate them via Ancestry.com which allowed me to access the information specifically for the City of Des Moines. However, despite having the documents, they were not digitized, and I needed to go through almost 1,000 pages to get all the data needed to make the most accurate 1920s map I could with the information I found. For each year, I collected data for total population, African American population, and white population to compare over the time period mentioned above.

Along with the data, a main purpose of collecting the demographic information was to produce maps which would act as my visual comparison across the 90-year period. To produce the maps, I also needed to collect shapefiles to use in the program known ArcGIS. These files were provided to me by the IPUMS National Historic GIS database, as well as the State of Iowa GIS database. The 1920 map had not been digitized; however I received some help from Daria Kuznetsova, a Community and Regional Planning Master's graduate from Iowa State University, who converted the information from the physical map into a shapefile that could use to put the

data into. Her help was greatly appreciated with this time-consuming task. After receiving the shapefile from her for the 1920 map, the last item I was tasked with for each map was to join the excel data with the shapefile to develop choropleth maps based on the number of African Americans per census tract. With the maps completed, I used the program QGIS to convert the shapefiles into GeoJSON files that were used to code the maps online.

Qualitative:

This research utilized the qualitative form of interviews to obtain information regarding individual and community feelings and experiences related to segregation and discrimination in the City of Des Moines. It was particularly important for this study to find individuals that could provide different perspectives, reveal detailed and unrestricted information about their experiences, and could help provide a more accurate and complete social history of African Americans in Des Moines. For the interview process, I received IRB approval.

The participants desired for this research were African American adults living in Des Moines or who had lived in Des Moines who could speak to their own experiences or their family's experiences in terms of segregation and discrimination within Des Moines. The interviews were done in person and were formatted to be semi-structured, which meant starting out with an initial set of questions that spurred the conversation and allowed for flexibility in the stories told and experiences had. While sparking the conversation, the questions were also used to direct the participant to make sure they answered certain, important questions that would benefit the research. The interviews were scheduled to be around one to two hours and it was made clear to those who participated that, unless otherwise noted, their voices would be audio recorded in order to provide accurate quoting in the writing process.

The initial questions are listed below:

1. How long have (did) you lived in Des Moines, Iowa?
2. What was your experience like moving to Des Moines?
3. Can you tell me a little bit about the community you lived in?
4. Has your community changed since you first lived there? In what ways?
5. Please tell me about your experiences trying to become a homeowner.
    a. Was it easy to find a place to live?
    b. How did you find a place to live? Through your community or agent?

    c. Do you think you were shown only specific places you could live because of your race (redlining)?
6. Could you tell me a little about a time when you experienced any discrimination in your housing search and/or journey?
7. How would you describe the Des Moines community in terms segregation and discrimination during the time you lived there?
8. Is there anything else you want to add that you think might be helpful for this research?
9. Do you know of anyone else who I should talk to that could benefit this research?

While the use of snowball sampling, my method for gaining participants, went well and I received names of several individuals to set interviews up with, the process of getting those interviews done in a short amount of time was not possible. This network of individuals that were contacted to participate were unavailable and unable to meet in the time allotted for this project. I was only able to interview one individual who provided a great deal of information to help supplement the research, by the completion of this project. While this did not go the way it was intended, it is my hope that moving forward this project provides a place where more interviews can take place and can provide a more well-rounded narrative of experiences in the African American community of Des Moines.

Coding:

This research has a website component that was coded using JavaScript, HTML and CSS. I coded this website in a way that is stylistic and interactive, as well as being easily accessible and navigable. Within these languages, I used Leaflet, which is an open-source JavaScript library for creating user friendly interactive maps, and Tableau, which is an online graph, map and information visual organizer to help present information online.

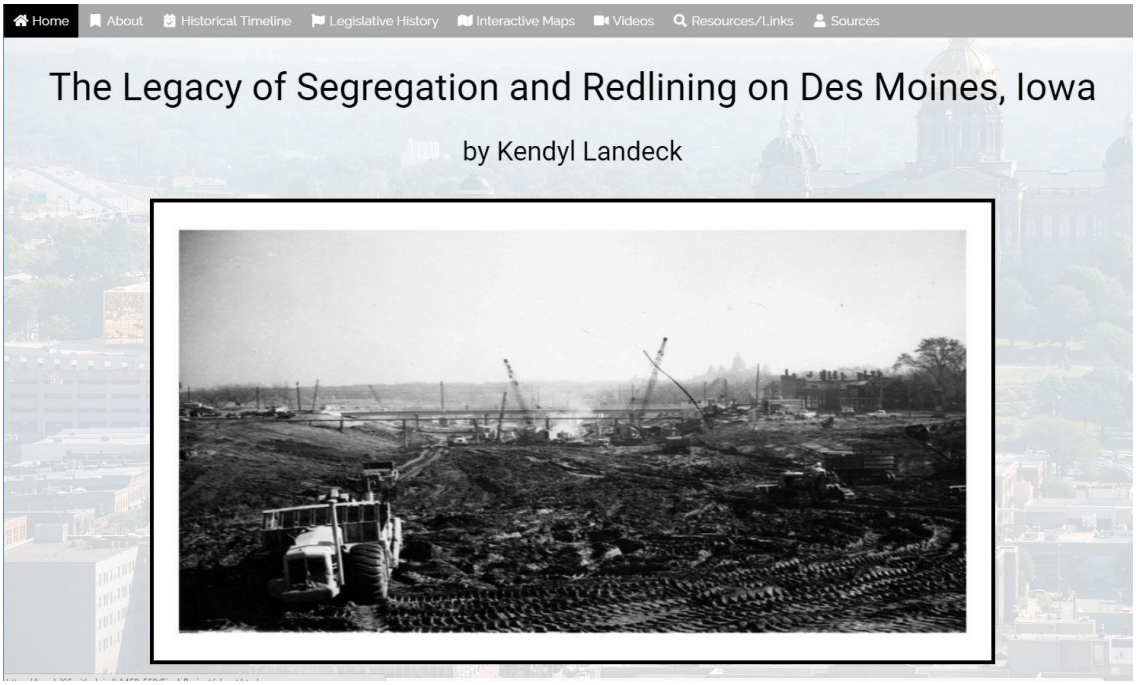
Research Boundaries:

It must also be noted that this research has some boundary limitations. This research focuses primarily on the African American and White difference in terms of population, housing statistics and other data points mentioned in the research. The population information for each census tract does not account for other demographic groups, however, it is recognized that there

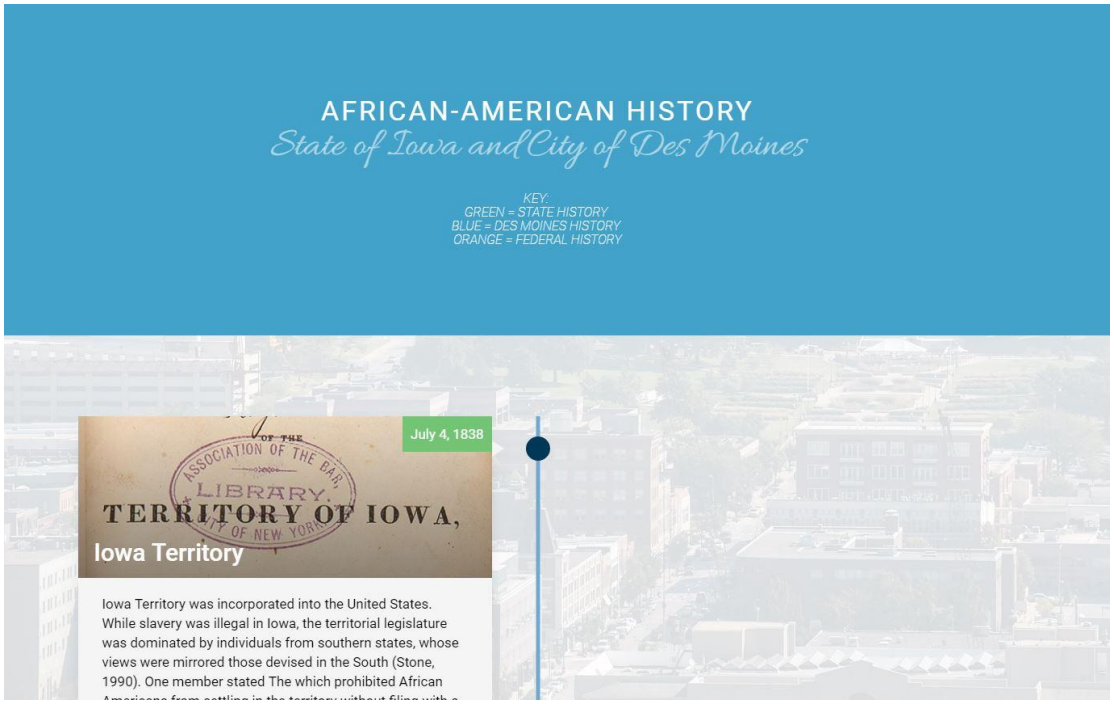
are other groups and factors that may play a role or have a similar narrative to the one described in this research. This research also does not address, in depth, the impact of race on property values, homeownership, rentership, education, transportation or employment opportunities, but recognizes that these aspects are extremely important and should have more research done with them in mind. Lastly, this research does not address the impact that the 2008 Housing Crisis and predatory lending had on the African American population in Des Moines, Iowa. This will need to have more research done in order to provide a more accurate analysis of the present-day problems facing African American residents in the City of Des Moines in relationship to housing.

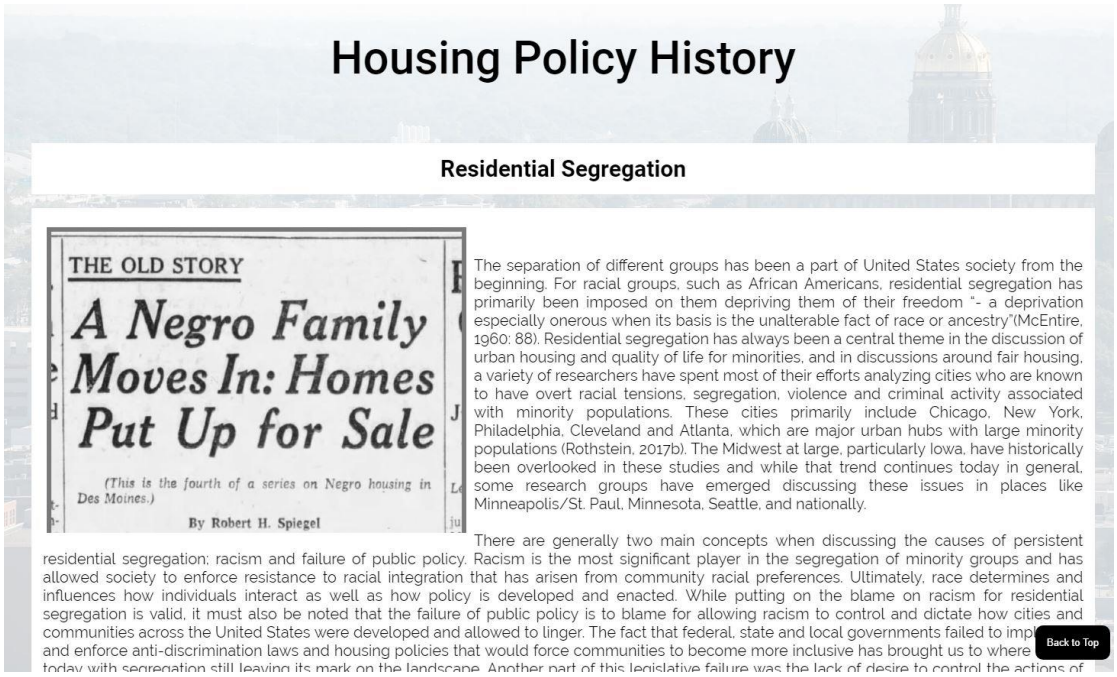
Website

The product of this research was the creation of an online resource tool in the form of a website. The primary purpose of this tool would be for educational use and community engagement. I believe this research's most important contribution is the production of material, provided to the public, in an easy and accessible format, as well as provide a service to support the good of the community. In Des Moines, much of the research done on the African American community is not easily accessible, there is no current research documenting redlining and segregation and its effect on present day African American populations. This information about the history of Des Moines and the impact it has had on the city's African American community is extremely important to provide to the community of Des Moines. Through the production of a website, this research and more research done in the future, can be accessed easily online without limitation.



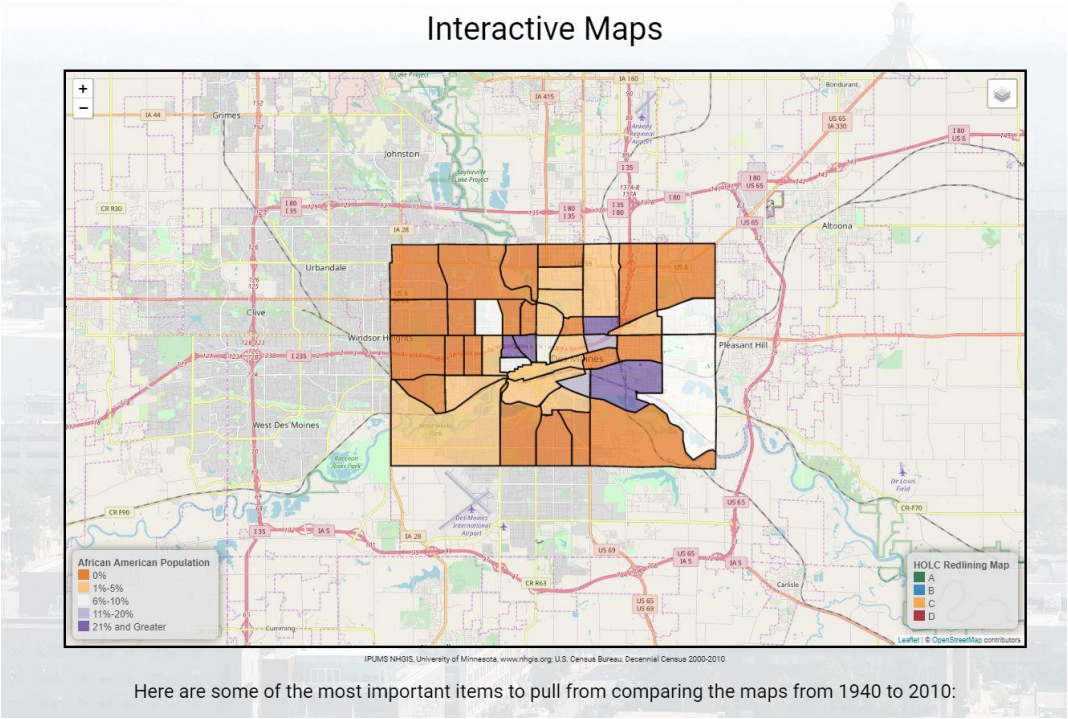
The website includes three main components; historical examination, visual comparison of maps, and external resources. The first component, historical examination, includes two pages that (1) describe federal, state, and local housing policies that impacted the housing efforts of African Americans, and (2) provide a timeline of African American history between 1838-2018. The purpose of these pages is to provide a narrative that will help any visitor to the website gain a wide range of knowledge surrounding the topic of race and segregation and provide some background into how this impacts the Des Moines community.

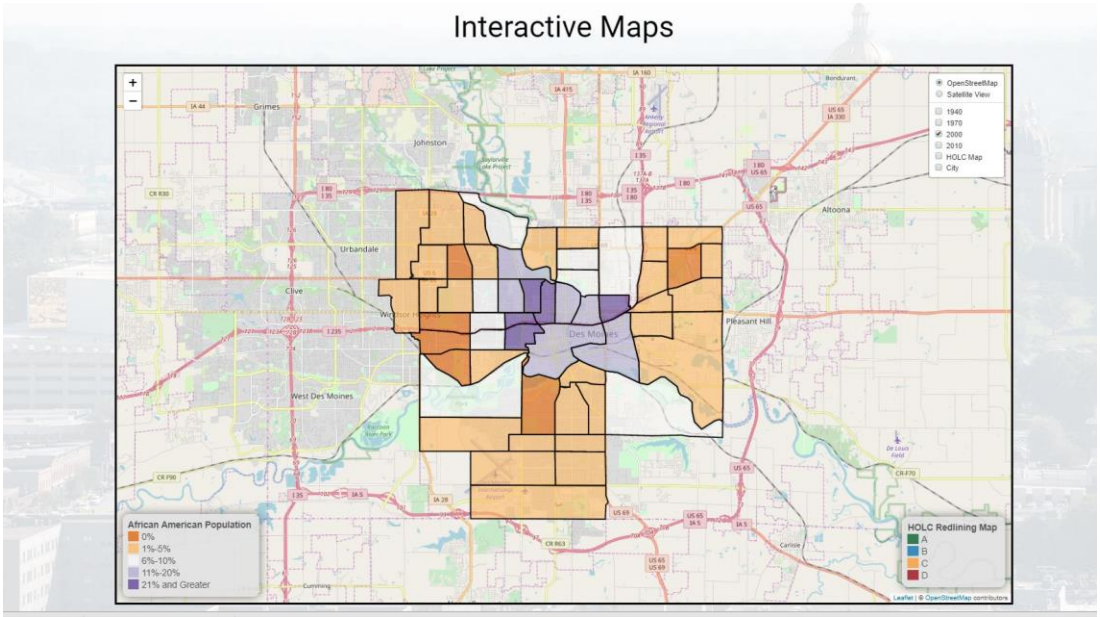


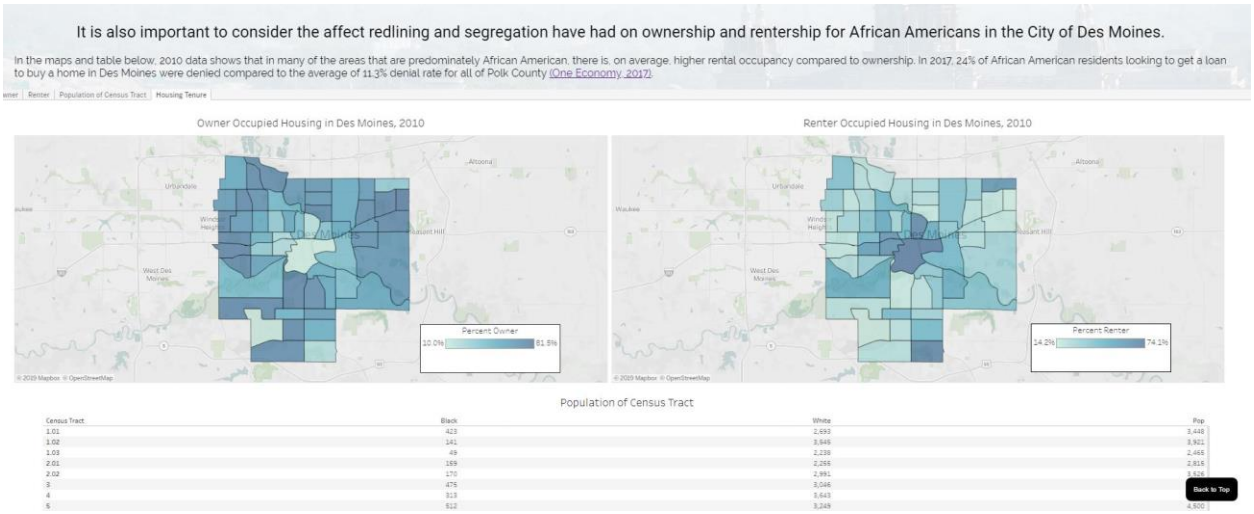


The second component, visual comparison, is a single page that has an interactive map which depict the 1936 HOLC redlining map of Des Moines, 1940 census data, 1970 census data, 2000 census data, 2010 census data, and the current City of Des Moines boundary. This map allow users to visualize the change over time of the African American population and see how the changes each year compare to the redlining map and each other. This page also includes

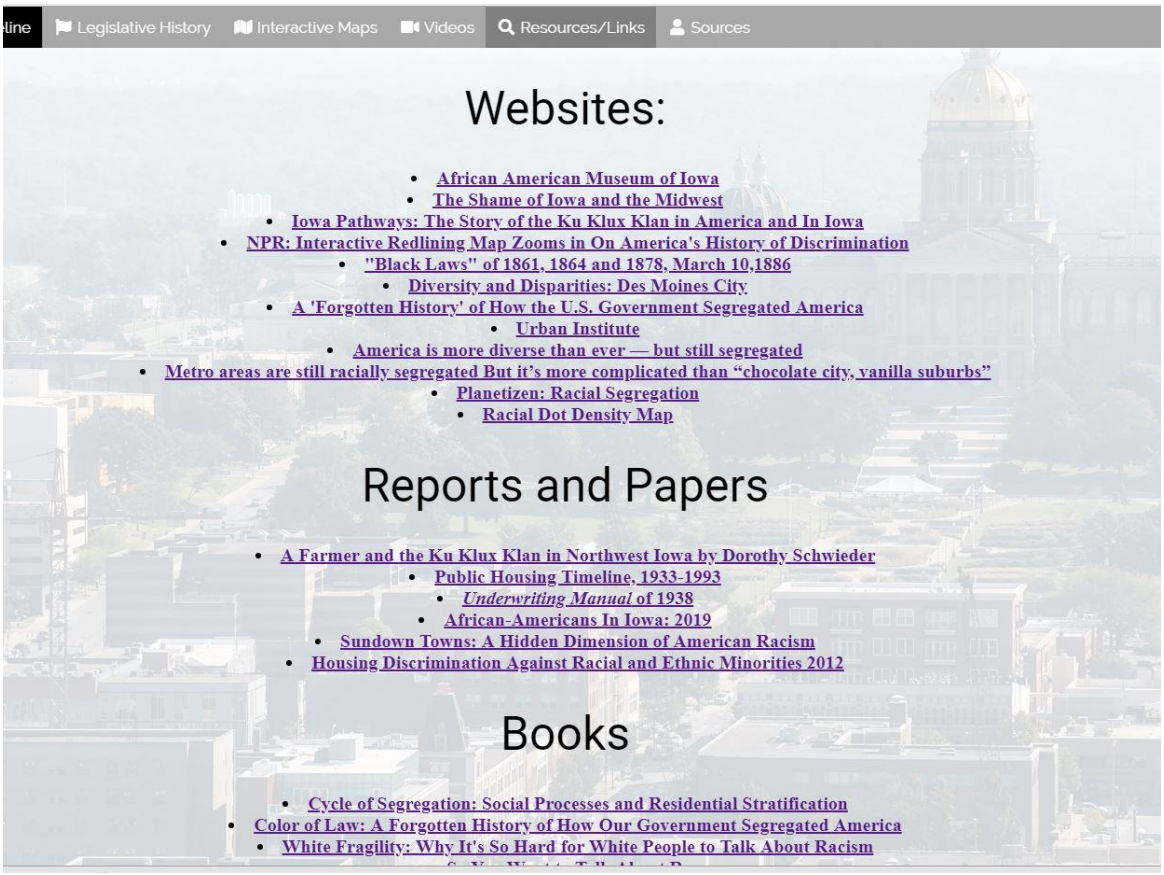
information about property values, health of neighborhoods, and ownership vs. rentership in the census tracts and neighborhoods of Des Moines from 2010. The purpose of this page is to provide a visual way to see how the legacy of segregation has impacted where African Americans have lived in the City of Des Moines decades after the end of segregation in housing.

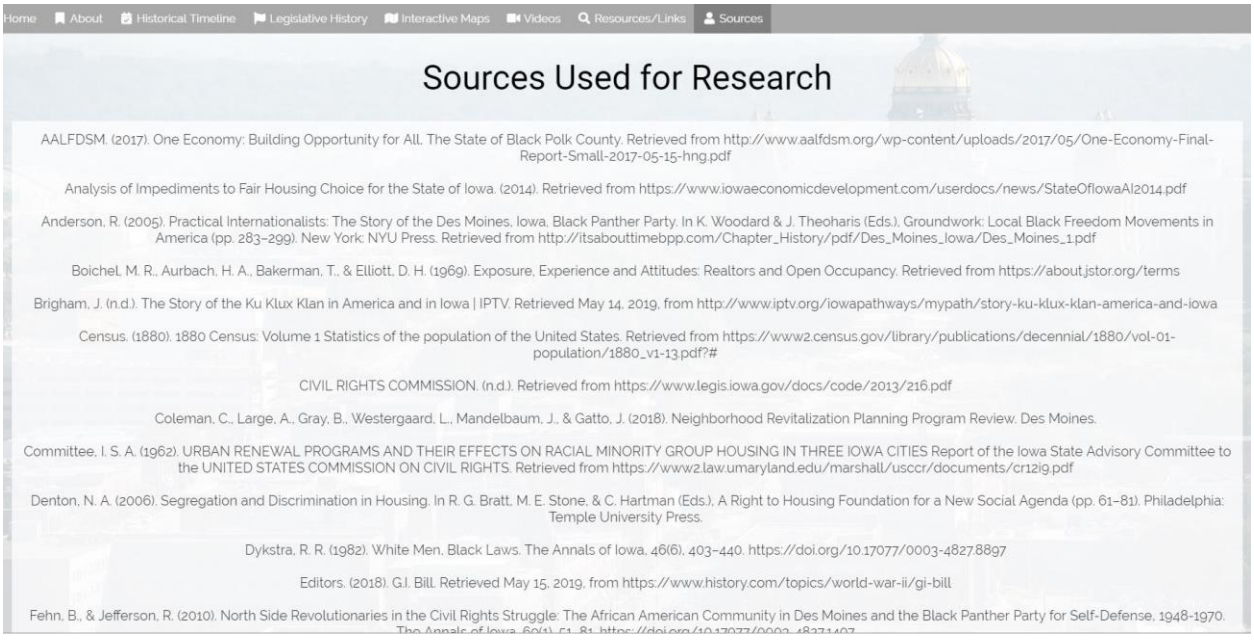






The final component, external resources, includes two pages of resources for further investigation into the topic. The first resource page includes informational videos that provide more explanation about redlining, discriminatory housing practices, and segregation. The second resource page provides links to reports, websites and books that are longer resources with interesting stories from places across the United States. The books especially are good for people who are more interested in learning about the topics addressed in this research and more.


Legislative History
Interactive Maps
Videos
Resources/Links
Sources
Websites:
African American Museum of Iowa
The Shame of Iowa and the Midwest
Iowa Pathways: The Story of the Ku Klux Klan in America and In Iowa
NPR: Interactive Redlining Map Zooms in On America's History of Discrimination
"Black Laws" of 1861, 1864 and 1878, March 10,1886
Diversity and Disparities: Des Moines City
A 'Forgotten History' of How the U.S. Government Segregated America
Urban Institute
America is more diverse than ever — but still segregated
Metro areas are still racially segregated But it's more complicated than "chocolate city, vanilla suburbs"
Planetizen: Racial Segregation
Racial Dot Density Map
Reports and Papers
A Farmer and the Ku Klux Klan in Northwest Iowa by Dorothy Schwieder
Public Housing Timeline, 1933-1993
Underwriting Manual of 1938
African-Americans In Iowa: 2019
Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism
Housing Discrimination Against Racial and Ethnic Minorities 2012
Books
Cycle of Segregation: Social Processes and Residential Stratification
Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America
White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism


Home
About
Historical Timeline
Legislative History
Interactive Maps
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Sources
Sources Used for Research
AALFDSM. (2017). One Economy: Building Opportunity for All. The State of Black Polk County. Retrieved from http://www.aalfdsm.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/One-Economy-Final-Report-Small-2017-05-15-hng.pdf
Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice for the State of Iowa. (2014). Retrieved from https://www.iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/userdocs/news/StateOfIowaAI2014.pdf
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Editors. (2018). G.I. Bill. Retrieved May 15, 2019, from https://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/gi-bill
Fehn, B., & Jefferson, R. (2010). North Side Revolutionaries in the Civil Rights Struggle: The African American Community in Des Moines and the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, 1948-1970.

The remaining pages on the website relate primarily to my research including a source page of the literature I used, the about page which describes the project and the importance of this project, and the main page, which includes images and the abstract of my research.

It is my hope that the website expands to include more sections such as community discussion, community stories and policy initiatives to combat embedded segregation, which would be added on by other organizations who would provide that information.

Here is the link to the website: https://kendyl66.github.io/LA458-558/Final-Project/page1.html.

Next Steps

It is the intention of this project to be a public education and community tool that will help to spark conversation and bring knowledge to the Des Moines community about the legacy that race has played in the city over time. It is well known that the conversation regarding race, discrimination, and segregation is not a new one; however, it remains unresolved. Segregation and discrimination against people of color is a critically important topic today that must be discussed among all ages and platforms, especially as it pertains to the City of Des Moines. It is my hope that this research be used by public educators to allow their students to gain a better understanding of their communities, be able to help them understand past and current race issues facing their communities, and allow for them to become involved in their communities through participating in conversations around the topic of race.

As a community tool, I hope that this online resource provides a platform for people to gain knowledge about past and present race relations, start more conversations about how this might have affected their communities and aid in shifting how decisions are made in the City of Des Moines. It is a goal of this online resource to be a living document that adds information over time from community members and organizations who want their stories heard.

As a living document, it is extremely important for this research to be provided to organizations who have other materials that could be used to supplement this information. These organizations would include the NAACP, the African American Museum of Iowa, the State Historical Society, Urban Dreams, Polk County Housing Trust Fund and any other community groups that have stories and information to share. These organizations will then use the website to compile stories, narratives, and historical information, as well as facilitate discussion around the issue of race in order to provide a well-rounded resource that can be used for public purposes, including education and community engagement.

I see this tool as being a very valuable tool for planners and decision makers as it provides information about the community's history surrounding race and discrimination which does not get discussed on a regular basis. I think it is extremely important for planners to gain this knowledge, to recognize the lasting impact of redlining and segregation, and understand that subtle practices in lending and housing are still used today. Each of these factors affect the growth of communities. Similarly, for decision makers this information provides information that impacts different groups within the community, and it is important to use this knowledge to made better, more tolerant and informed decisions.

In conclusion, this research primarily addresses the impact the legacy of redlining and segregation has had and continues to have on Des Moines. It is evident from this research that African Americans, for the most part, remain concentrated in neighborhoods although higher concentrations of African Americans are spreading across the city, perhaps a factor of a growing population. This leads to inquires as to the influences that are causing them to shift, and, conversely, as to what is happening in the suburban areas that might be drawing more white residents to the higher end suburbs and what other housing options might become available for African Americans in the city. Understanding this longstanding housing history of African Americans in Des Moines may prove vital in determining how Des Moines should deal with community building and rebuilding for persons of color and persons of need; which state and federal programs have failed to build sustainable low-income communities and which have helped, and what new planning ideas could be generated through community input to build sustainable safe, low-income communities or to integrate persons from those communities into

more affluent communities where good jobs are available. In order to have meaningful change in any part of a community, the citizens, politicians and community leaders must have a broad understanding of the impact different policies and regulations may have on diverse communities. Only then, when history is known and considered, will planners and officials be able to make better decisions on how to address the tainted legacy of race discrimination in the Metro area.

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